Pathfinder Society®

Season of the Ten

The Rasping Rebirth

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HOW TO PLAY

Pathfinder Society Scenario #10–09: The Rasping Rebirth is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 12th- through 15th-level characters (Tier 12–15; Subtiers 12–13 and 14–15). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Roleplaying Guild campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Roleplaying Guild, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at **PathfinderSociety.club**.

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GM Resources

The Rasping Rebirth makes use of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, and *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* (MA). This adventure assumes the GM has access to these sourcebooks. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at **pfrd.info**, and the relevant rules from the *Bestiary* volumes are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

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THE RASPING REBIRTH

By Cole Kronewitter

Millennia have passed since the glabrezu demon now known as Koth'Vaul first emerged from the Abyss and began spinning intricate webs of deceit and loss. He cloaked himself in the guise of a cast of wise advisors and tempted pure-hearted mortal leaders toward ruin, only to vanish before any of his victims truly understood the cause of their misfortune. He gained respect among many lesser demons in the Abyss, earning the honorific title Lying Horns for his skill at tempting mortals to damnation. As his arrogance grew, Koth'Vaul attempted increasingly daring schemes. After a failed con against a cabal of wizards of ancient Thassilon exposed a piece of his true name, skilled thaumaturgists imprisoned him underground, where he remained trapped for millennia. In recent years, a group of Pathfinders uncovered the demon just as Koth'Vaul was on the cusp of bursting through the time-weakened wards restraining him. To prevent him from roaming free across Golarion, Pathfinder agents banished Koth'Vaul back to the Abyss.

The glabrezu did not remain in the Abyss for long. He quickly caught up on the major events that had affected Golarion since his imprisonment, and then he researched the Pathfinder Society that had dared to interfere with his plans. In the years since, he has been a constant thorn in the Pathfinder Society's side, granting aid to the corrupted Venture-Captain Thurl and helping in a siege of Absalom. When the siege failed, Koth'Vaul abandoned Thurl and focused his efforts on other plots.

While the glabrezu has been gathering strength, other demons have suffered a crippling blow. The Fifth Mendevian Crusade against the Worldwound has ended in victory, with the Worldwound's breach to the Abyss closed and its patron, the demon lord Deskari, slain. Koth'Vaul knew that the recently sealed wound would be weak, and he suspected that a fragment of Deskari's power may still lurk within his corpse. If he could outwit the ancient guardians of the Rift of Repose, the resting place for many fallen demon lords, he could perhaps seize this power and use it to fuel his own apotheosis. Koth'Vaul's plan has been successful thus far: he has devoured one of Deskari's hearts. Now he lurks in an unclaimed portion of the Abyss, which he is warping into his own new realm.

Where on Golarion?

The Rasping Rebirth begins in the lodge of Starrise Spire in Mendev, but quickly heads into the Worldwound and several locations throughout the Abyss, including Deskari's realm. For more information about the Worldwound, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Worldwound*. For more information on the Rasping Rifts and other locations in the Abyss, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path # 78: City of Locusts* and *Pathfinder RPG: Book of the Damned*, available in bookstores and game stores everywhere and online at **paizo.com**.

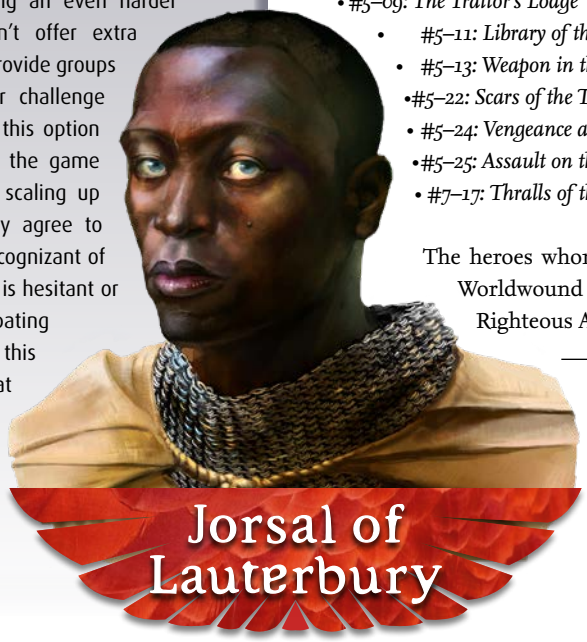
SUMMARY

The scenario begins in the lodge of Starrise Spire in Nerosyan. Here, Venture-Captain Jorsal of Lauterbury updates the PCs on the situation. Koth'Vaul has traveled deep into the Worldwound, reactivated one of the portals that Deskari used to travel between the Worldwound and the Abyss, and slipped into Deskari's former realm. The PCs are tasked with following the demon's trail and putting an end to Koth'Vaul's schemes once and for all.

Unbeknownst to the PCs, Koth'Vaul has long anticipated that his enemies would follow his footsteps and laid webs of misdirection over his trail. After tracking the demon through the Worldwound, the PCs discover Koth'Vaul's portal to the Rasping Rifts and encounter a nearly dead crusader—one

Abyssal Horrors

Beginning in Season 4, all scenarios operate under the assumption that there are six players in the group and provide instructions for scaling down the adventure for smaller groups. The Rasping Rifts also provides notes for scaling the difficulty up. Playing an even harder version of the scenario doesn't offer extra rewards; it's available solely to provide groups a legal way to face a greater challenge and win bragging rights. Make this option available to the players before the game begins, and use the notes for scaling up only if all the players explicitly agree to take on the extra challenge. Be cognizant of the players' desires; if even one is hesitant or must be pressured into participating on "hard mode," don't use this option. Also keep in mind that tougher battles take longer to finish, so using this option could cause the adventure to run considerably longer than a 4- to 5-hour slot.



of the demon's many minions left behind to misdirect the PCs. Clues seem to indicate that Koth'Vaul seeks to recover the mythic scythe of Deskari, which is currently held within the belly of an enormous demon beetle in the Rasping Rifts. After slaying the beast, however, the PCs learn that the scythe is a cursed decoy.

Whether they fall for Koth'Vaul's deception or not, the PCs travel to the Rift of Repose in pursuit of the glabrezu. After battling the guardians of the Rift of Repose, the PCs discover that they are too late. Koth'Vaul has already stolen a heart from the breast of Deskari's titanic remains and is on his way to becoming a true demon lord himself. But not all is lost, as the PCs discover an unlikely ally in the shattered spirit of Deskari, which seeks to regain the essence that Koth'Vaul stole.

After choosing whether or not to accept Deskari's aid, the PCs finally confront Koth'Vaul, who is crafting a new realm for himself in a remote corner of the Abyss.

GETTING STARTED

Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure.

"Greetings Pathfinders," says Venture-Captain Jorsal of Lauterbury, as he turns from gazing out a window of the Starrise Spire. Over his shoulder, the tortured landscape of the Worldwound broods in the distance. "I hope you all are well. This mission promises to be challenging, even for agents of your caliber."

Before he continues with the briefing, Jorsal personally thanks PCs with Chronicle sheets from any of the following Pathfinder Society Scenarios for their contributions to the Fifth Mendevian Crusade against the Worldwound:

- *#5–00: Siege of the Diamond City*
- *#5–02: The Wardstone Patrol*
- *#5–03: The Hellknight's Feast*
- *#5–09: The Traitor's Lodge*
- *#5–11: Library of the Lion*
- *#5–13: Weapon in the Rift*
- *#5–22: Scars of the Third Crusade*
- *#5–24: Vengeance at Sundered Crag*
- *#5–25: Assault on the Wound*
- *#7–17: Thralls of the Shattered God.*

The heroes whom Jorsal credits with sealing the Worldwound are the heroes of the Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path.

"As you have likely heard by now, The Fifth Mendevian Crusade is over, at long last. With support from countless crusaders, including considerable assistance from the Pathfinder Society, a group of heroes has managed to seal the Worldwound. As a part of their charge through the Worldwound and into the Abyss, they slew a host of demons, most notable among them the demon lord Deskari. With the imminent threat of invasion gone, many of the holy warriors who served here have returned home. Mendev is still dealing with a continuing effort to clear out the Worldwound's remaining demons, which is plenty of work to keep our crusaders busy. Yet danger remains—some opportunistic demons seek to seize upon pieces of the power vacuum left in Deskari's wake.

"One such demon is the glabrezu Koth'Vaul, also known as Lying Horns. No doubt some of you are familiar with his vile history. His machinations have plagued the Pathfinder Society for years. The demon was a lead mastermind behind the siege of Absalom. It was his foul magic that granted unholy resurrection to the corrupted Venture-Captain Thurl, another great enemy of the Society. We recently brought Thurl to justice, but so far Koth'Vaul has eluded us.

"Now it seems that Koth'Vaul is picking at the seams of the Worldwound. Our scouts and diviners report that the glabrezu and his followers ventured into the Worldwound several days ago and tore open a portal leading to the Abyss. We can only guess at what his intentions are. Needless to say, the Pathfinder Society greatly desires to settle the score with Koth'Vaul and put a stop to whatever he is planning. Your task is track the demon through the Worldwound and into the Abyss beyond. End his miserable existence once and for all."

After his briefing, Jorsal answers questions to the best of his ability. He recognizes the value of preparation, but he urges the PCs to spend no more than 1 day getting ready, lest Koth'Vaul's trail grow cold.

What sort of resistance can we expect? "We know that Koth'Vaul has gathered his most loyal servants to himself, suggesting he is planning something important. Based on reports, it seems six humans and three demons accompany him. It is likely that the humans are corrupted mortals who have given themselves over to Koth'Vaul. Although killing them may be necessary, it would be a virtuous work to bring them to redemption instead." In Subtier 12–13, Jorsal reports that, based on what trackers can tell, the three demons are likely vrocks. In Subtier 14–15, he reports that they are likely glabrezu demons.

Where does the portal go? "Our divinations indicate that the portal leads to the Rasping Rifts, which is the realm of the slain demon lord Deskari. It is an endless maze of chasms and rifts filled with swarming insects. Few mortals have ventured there and returned to tell the tale. In addition to hordes of demons, it is also inhabited by giant insects, mosquitoes big enough to drain a person dry, and terrible Abyssal constructs called retrievers."

What is Koth'Vaul up to? "It is uncertain what his plans are, but so far all his schemes have been subtle and difficult to detect. The fact that he has shown himself so openly suggests that he is preparing for a major strike. Our diviners were careful not to delve too deeply, as Koth'Vaul has used divinations against us in the past. There is a good reason that glabrezus are also called treachery demons. Be cautious as you follow the demon's trail and do your best to discern his true purpose."

MUHLIA'S MISSIVE

If any of the PCs earned the Al-Jakri's Debt boon on the Chronicle sheet for *Pathfinder Society Scenario #9–25: Betrayal in the Bones*, a mysterious messenger approaches them before they leave the Starrise Spire and hands them a message (**Handout #1** on page 24).

Following the instructions in the letter, the PCs can inscribe their weapons and armor with true name fragments, at the cost of one vial of holy water per inscription. In The Final Confrontation, inscribed armor grants a +1 sacred bonus to the PC's AC against Koth'Vaul's vrock servants (or glabrezu servants in Subtier 14–15). An inscribed weapon gains a +1 sacred bonus on attack and damage rolls against those servants, and it also makes the weapon count as good for the purposes of bypassing the servants' DR. While inscribing, one PC can attempt a single DC 34 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (arcana) check to imbue all of the PCs' runes with additional power. On a success, these bonuses double to +2. In Subtier 14–15, increase this DC by 3. To accommodate a group of four PCs, reduce this DC by 3.

On Trickery and Divination

Although Jorsal counsels against it, some PCs might be tempted to use magic to divine Koth'Vaul's whereabouts. The glabrezu long ago learned to shield himself from such efforts, and he has crafted an elaborate ruse using *wish* spells for this exact circumstance. Any scrying cast on Koth'Vaul during the scenario reveals the demon locked in battle with a sea of insects, which slams into body in chittering waves. In the vision, Koth'Vaul is slowly fighting his way toward a massive beetle—the beetle whose true location is in area **A**. This false image is a red herring designed to draw enemies into the Chasm of Crawling Consumption (see page 7). Spells that attempt to find a creature's location, such as *discern location*, also follow this false trail. Koth'Vaul has guarded his illusion against divination effects—spells like *detect magic* and *true seeing* do not reveal its nature.

There are many other divinations the PCs could employ, and if the PCs are particularly careful, they may be able to learn accurate information. After all, Koth'Vaul did not have enough *wish* spells available to cloak his actions from all potential divinations. Although his location is obscured, cautious PCs could still learn facts about Koth'Vaul's true plans, his plans for ascension, or his current followers.

THE TRAIL OF TREACHERY

Once the PCs are ready, they can set out in pursuit of Koth'Vaul. To save time, Jorsal arranges a *greater teleport* spell for the PCs, which deposits them within a few miles of the portal to the Abyss. Be sure to narrate the jarring shift as the PCs are transported from the relative noise and bustle of civilization to the uncomfortable quiet of the Worldwound.

Alternatively, the PCs likely have considerable resources at their disposal and may decide to simply *plane shift* directly to the Rasping Rifts. The PCs can pick up Koth'Vaul's trail with a successful DC 34 Survival check and 1d4 hours of searching (DC 37 in Subtier 14–15). If a PC succeeds at this check, she detects and correctly identifies a false trail that Koth'Vaul planted, and the party is able to ignore the demon's trickery and find the true path. Proceed to area **A**. If the PCs fail the Survival check, they instead follow this false trail straight to the Chasm of Crawling Consumption (see page 7).

THE PORTAL

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the portal. Some PCs might interrupt the monologue in an attempt to heal the mortally wounded man; such attempts wither and fail automatically. The man is kept alive through necromantic magic and cannot be saved by anything short of a *miracle* or *wish*. The strange failure of healing magic is an important clue to the nature of the ruse (see page 6).

Scaling the Trail of Treachery

For a group of four PCs, lower the DCs of all skill checks in this section by 3, and lower the DCs of all saving throws by 2.

For groups seeking a greater challenge, increase the DCs of all skill checks in this section by 2, and increase the DC of all saving throws by 2. In addition, PCs who fail a saving throw against the swarms of the Chasm of Crawling Consumption find themselves beset by an apocalyptic swarm of plague locusts. In addition to the damage listed in the encounter, all of the PCs' nonmagical equipment is destroyed, and one of their magic items (as determined by the chart on page 216 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*) takes 5d6 points of damage. The locust's jaws count as adamantine for the purposes of bypassing hardness.

A gaping chasm rends the ground, a blood-red glow emanating from its depths. The rocky walls of the chasm are blanketed with buzzing locusts, and the sickly sweet scent of rotted fruit fills the air. An armored figure lying in a pool of blood near the edge of chasm suddenly lets out a gasp and speaks in a pained, halting voice.

"Help... you must stop the demon. I tried to slay him but was struck down. He is searching for Riftcarver... a legendary weapon. He wants to use it... to open portals... summon demons."

The wounded figure lets out a hacking cough and continues, "You must find the weapon. Only Riftcarver can kill Koth'Vaul. It is guarded... the belly of a demon-beetle... the Eternal Hive... near the ruins of Deskari's castle. Use its power... to kill Koth'Vaul."

With a final, tortured gasp, the man dies.

The mortally wounded man is a crusader named Gwythion. Although Gwythion believes that Koth'Vaul truly is seeking *Riftcarver*, the story is false: the demon has far greater ambitions in mind. Koth'Vaul tricked Gwythion many years ago, appearing to the crusader in the guise of an angel of his deity, the empyreal lord Vildeis. Koth'Vaul has used the crusader as his pawn for many years. After arriving at the portal, he mortally wounded Gwythion in his true form, temporarily rendered him unconscious, and then used foul magic to preserve the crusader's life long enough to deliver a false message to anyone foolish enough to pursue the demon. Koth'Vaul ultimately hopes to lure his enemies into a trap, diverting attention away from his true plans. Suspicious PCs can uncover signs of treachery, as noted below.

Gwythion's Wounds: PCs that try to heal the crusader may be intrigued by their inability to do so. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Heal check (DC 32 in Subtier 14–15) realizes that Gwythion's wounds should have killed him hours or even days ago. *Detect magic* is not strong enough to pierce Koth'Vaul's deception, but a PC who uses higher-level detection magic like *arcane sight* notices a strong aura of necromancy magic on the crusader. PCs who notice this aura can attempt a DC 32 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check (DC 35 in Subtier 14–15) to unveil the magic's nature. Gwythion was the subject of a necromantic ritual designed to prolong the subject's life until performing a particular action—in this case, revealing a particular piece of information. This ritual kept Gwythion alive until he provided the PCs with the false lead.

Searching Gwythion: A search of Gwythion reveals that the crusader was prepared for a long journey and has fully packed bags. If the PCs remove his plate armor, they can plainly see deep scars on Gwythion's back between his shoulder blades. Koth'Vaul took some effort to conceal the true nature of these scars. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) or Knowledge (religion) check notices symbolism tied to the empyreal lord Vildeis, an angelic demigod of devotion, sacrifice, and scars. However, a PC who succeeds at this check by 10 or more (or by 13 or more in Subtier 14–15) realizes that the symbols have been subtly perverted, and that a demonic sigil is hidden among them. This is the mark of Koth'Vaul. Worshippers of Vildeis automatically recognize the symbolism of their deity, and they receive a +10 bonus on this skill check to find and identify the demonic sigil.

***Riftcarver*:** A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check knows that the legendary scythe that Gwythion mentions was Deskari's favored weapon. It spreads infection with every strike and has the power to cause earthquakes and tear open portals to other planes.

The Eternal Hive: A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (planes) check knows that the Eternal Hive was one of Deskari's earliest creations, a hyperintelligent hive mind of insects housed within the body of an enormous demon-beetle. The massive creature served both as a troop transport for Deskari's elite retriever constructs and as an incubator for the demon lord's brood of experimental demon creations.

Development: Whether or not they discover Gwythion's treachery, the PCs must venture through the portal to find Koth'Vaul. Simply diving into the chasm transports the PCs directly to Deskari's Abyssal realm, the Rasping Rifts.

Although the PCs could attempt to seal the rift at this time, doing so is time-consuming and tiring. If they do attempt this task, refer to the Sealing the Wound section on page 23.

The Rasping Rifts is a bewildering maze of rifts and chasms. Swarms of crawling insects writhe over the canyon walls, and much of the ground is covered with molted husks and dead insects. If a PC succeeds at a DC 28 Survival check (DC 32 in Subtier 14–15), she uncovers the trail of Koth'Vaul and his minions winding through the crushed shells that litter the canyon floor to area **A**. On a failed Survival check, the PCs follow a false trail into the Chasm of Crawling Consumption.

THE CHASM OF CRAWLING CONSUMPTION

Koth'Vaul realized the possibility that someone might try to follow him, and so he laid false trails to a particularly horrifying part of Deskari's former realm. The PCs travel to this location only if they fail a check to track Koth'Vaul, follow the results of divinations that indicate his location, or otherwise fall in to the demon's trap. If the PCs would travel to the chasm a second time, they recognize the location before the swarms attack and are not exposed to the hazard again.

Hazard: The Chasm of Crawling Consumption represents the ravenous hunger of multitudes of insects. Trillions of biting and stinging insects live among its spawning network of nests and warrens. Deskari once used this place to dispose of some of his enemies, along with servants who failed him. When Deskari was still alive, those who traveled here faced almost certain destruction, and Koth'Vaul expects that this fate awaits any who follow his false trail. The swarm has weakened sufficiently that it can no longer outright destroy creatures as powerful as the PCs, but the dogged hunger of trillions of insects still poses a major hindrance. Instead of running this as a combat encounter, assume that the PCs have the resources to escape the swarm's wrath after its initial assault. When the swarm attacks, each PC can attempt a DC 22 Fortitude save to mitigate its effects (DC 24 in Subtier 14–15). PCs take a –1 penalty on this saving throw for each step by which their alignment differs from chaotic evil. For example, a chaotic neutral PC would take a –1 penalty, while a lawful good PC would take a –4 penalty. Divine spellcasters who receive power from chaotic evil deities take no penalty regardless of their alignment.

The insects' bites infuse the PCs with the raw essence of the Abyss. PCs who fail the saving throw take 15d6 points of damage from the bites. Additionally, they take a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks, as well as a –2 penalty to their AC and to the DCs of their spells, for the duration of the scenario. While the PCs can heal the damage, the penalties cannot be removed by mortal means (though Deskari himself can remove it—see page 16). PCs who succeed at the saving throw take half damage and reduce the penalty from –2 to –1.

A. THE ETERNAL HIVE (CR 17 OR CR 19)

After 1 hour of travel, the trail leads into a deep canyon. Along the way, the PCs have a chance to see that Deskari's death has brought ruin to his kingdom. In the distance, demonic servitors of Deskari tear each other to pieces in a battle for supremacy, paying no mind to the PCs as they pass by. The once-mighty fortresses of the Rasping Rifts have already begun to crumble to ruin. A thick layer of insect husks blankets the floor of the canyon, crunching underfoot if the PCs walk on the ground and leaving clear footprints like snow.

PCs who climb or fly above the canyon walls can see the shattered fortress of Deskari looming in the distance, which is where the Eternal Hive resides. Vast swarms of insects fill the skies above the chasm, however, making such trips dangerous and impractical. PCs who spend more than a minute above the chasm walls attract the attention of an endless supply of ravenous insects, which deal 4d6 points of damage per round until the PC returns to the ravine.

After half an hour of travel through the canyon, the PCs round a sharp corner. Read or paraphrase the following.

An enormous beetle the size of a war galley rears its insectile head in this canyon. Massive, chitinous plates cover every inch of its mighty frame, save for its gaping, toothy maw, which opens into the fleshy and tunnellike stomach of the beast.

Adventuring in the Abyss

The Abyss has the following traits.

Strongly Evil-Aligned: Creatures that are not evil-aligned take a –2 penalty on Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma based checks.

Strongly Chaotic-aligned: Creatures that are not chaotic-aligned take a –2 penalty on Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma based checks.

Enhanced Magic: Spells and spell-like abilities with the chaotic or evil descriptor function as if their caster level were 2 higher than normal.

Impeded Magic: Spells and spell-like abilities with the lawful or good descriptor function as if their caster level were 2 lower than normal.

Scaling Encounter A

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

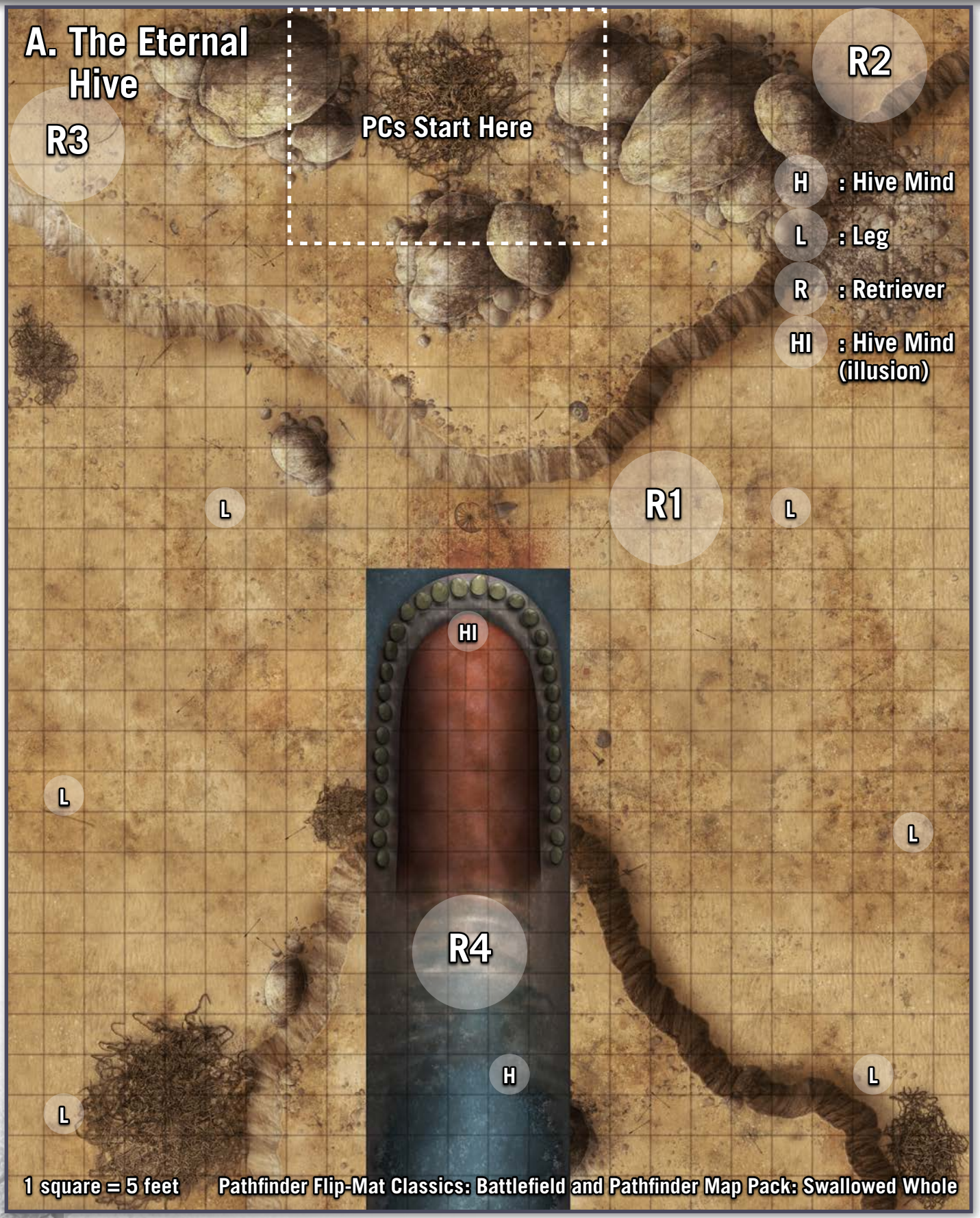
Subtier 12–13: Remove the retriever inside the beetle and one retriever from outside the beetle.

Subtier 14–15: Remove the retriever inside the beetle and two retrievers from outside the beetle.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12–13: Apply the advanced simple template to the worm that walks. Additionally, the beetle makes an additional bite or leg attack each round on the Eternal Hive's turn. This can allow the beetle to bite and gulp on the same turn. As long as the beetle lives, insects from its body swarm and replenish the Eternal Hive, doubling the effect of its fast healing ability.

Subtier 14–15: Apply all of the Subtier 12–13 adjustments and add an additional hive retriever to the encounter.


A. The Eternal Hive
PCs Start Here
R1
R2
R3
R4
H : Hive Mind
L : Leg
R : Retriever
HI : Hive Mind (illusion)
HI
H
L
1 square = 5 feet
Pathfinder Flip-Mat Classics: Battlefield and Pathfinder Map Pack: Swallowed Whole

Since the death of Deskari, the symbiotic creature known as the Eternal Hive has roamed this area of the Rasping Rifts, battling other servants of Deskari for supremacy of the decaying realm. Koth'Vaul parleyed with many of the remaining servants of Deskari in preparation for his apotheosis and ultimately struck a bargain with the Eternal Hive. Koth'Vaul helped slay several of the Eternal Hive's greatest rivals and in exchange secured the beast's service (for now). The Eternal Hive is well prepared and is expecting enemies on the trail of Koth'Vaul.

Terrain: A thick layer of insect husks covers the ground of this canyon. These shells don't impede movement, but they do make it easy to track invisible creatures, which leave a trail of disturbed shells in their wake. The boulders depicted on the map are each 10 feet high, and the short ledges both descend 5 feet to the canyon floor. The canyon is narrow here and the east and west edges of the battle map each end in a sheer cliff 100 feet high.

Creatures: The Eternal Hive is a complex symbiotic creature. Its primary body is that of a massive demon beetle, which serves as a protective shell and troop transport for the hive. The "brains" of the hive are held within a swarm of intelligent insects—a worm that walks of great power. In addition to this, the Eternal Hive is served by a handful of unique retriever servants, crafted from the cast-off shells of the demon beetle. Each retriever resembles a hideous cross between a spider and a locust, and they are capable of both flight and burrowing. Truly killing the Eternal Hive requires slaying all these creatures.

Unless the PCs took great pains to conceal their approach from the insects in the skies above the chasm, the insects have warned the Eternal Hive of the PC's approach. At the start of combat, the worm that walks is safely positioned inside the belly of the demon-beetle, out of view of creatures on the ground. It uses *project image* to appear to stand at the mouth of the beetle and cast spells during the fight. One retriever also hides inside the demon beetle, held in reserve to protect the worm that walks from assault. The remaining two retrievers have burrowed beneath the canyon floor, waiting to burst forth and surprise unwary PCs. If the PCs catch these creatures by surprise, all of the retrievers are out in the open, and the worm that walks, while still in the beetle's belly, has cast only *mage armor*.

Hazard: Ponderous and impregnable, the demon beetle is more a feature of the terrain than a foe. As long as the beetle is alive, it takes actions as described below. For the purposes of effects that depend upon creature type or alignment, it is a chaotic evil vermin native to the Abyss.

Beetle Features: The demon beetle has six enormous legs, which are marked by L tokens on the map. Each leg is 30 feet tall and blocks line of sight for ranged attacks. The central body of the beetle is roughly 55 feet wide with a 15-foot wide mouth. The bottom of the mouth is 20 feet off the ground. During most of the combat, the demon beetle leaves its maw wide open, meaning that PCs can easily fly inside the belly of the beast. PCs can also climb the legs and clamber across the creature's body to reach its mouth and enter the stomach (Climb DC 30), or they can wait for the beetle to attempt to eat them with its bite attack (see below). If the beetle is reduced to 100 hit points or fewer and the situation warrants it, the worm that walks can have the beetle forgo its bite attack and instead close its mouth, trapping any PCs inside until they exhaust the beetle's hit points.

Noxious digestive juices continuously seep from the inside walls of the beetle, dealing 2d6 points of acid damage (or 3d6 points of damage in Subtier 14–15) to any PCs inside the beetle at the start of their turn. The watery squares in back of the beast's gullet are a 5-foot deep pool of digestive juices. A PC submerged in this foul liquid takes 10d6 points of acid damage per round. The worm that walks and the retrievers are immune to this damage.

Bite Attack: Each round on initiative count 10, the demon beetle can extend its neck and make a bite attack with its mighty pincers (+23 attack, 4d8+10 points of damage). On a successful hit, the beetle automatically swallows its target whole, placing the target 10 feet inside the mouth of the beetle. In Subtier 14–15, the pincers have an attack bonus of +25 and deal 6d8+10 points of damage.

Gulp: Each round on initiative count 10, if there is at least one PC within the demon beetle's gullet, it might choose to gulp that PC down instead of making a bite attack. If it does, it tilts its body violently in an attempt to force the PC to slip down into its digestive juices. Each PC who is standing on the beetle (whether inside or outside its body) must attempt a DC 25 Acrobatics or Climb check (DC 28 in Subtier 14–15). On a failed check, PCs scaling the beetle from the outside fall to the ground, and PCs on the inside of the beetle slide down to the bottom of its gullet into the pool of acid. A PC flying inside the beetle must instead must succeed at a Fly check at the same DC to avoid slamming into the inner walls of the beetle's gullet, taking 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage and 1d6 points of acid damage.

Leg Attack: Each round on initiative count 0, the demon beetle moves two of its legs and slams them down somewhere else (move one of the L tokens to this new spot). Each creature within 10 feet of the leg must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or fall prone (DC 22 in Subtier 14–15). The beetle's legs have the same AC and other defenses as the beetle's exterior, but they each have their own independent pool of 30 hit points. If the PCs defeat one of the beetle's legs, that leg can no longer move. If the PCs take out three or more of the beetle's legs, it crashes to the ground (see The Beetle Falls, on page 10). It can no longer use its gulp ability, and it can use its bite attack only against PCs within 15 feet of its mouth.

Attacking the Beetle: The outside of the beetle is highly resistant to all attacks. Its tough hide is magically reinforced,

providing it defense against attacks of all kinds (AC 40, touch 40, flat-footed 40; hardness 25; spell resistance 30; immune to acid, electricity and poison; resistances to cold and fire 30). The inside of the beetle, however, is comparatively soft and fleshy. When attacked from within, it retains its immunities and resistances but loses its hardness and spell resistance, and its AC is only 20. If it is subjected to an effect that requires a saving throw, use the saving throws of the Hive Mind (though the Hive Mind does not suffer negative conditions if the beetle's body fails a saving throw—the body suffers any applicable conditions). After taking 300 points of damage, the demon-beetle dies.

The Beetle Falls: When the PCs deal 300 points of damage to the beetle or they take out three or more if its legs, it collapses to the ground, allowing all PCs to freely walk into its body. The crash spills out a pool of acid in a 20-foot radius around its mouth that deals 2d6 points of damage per round to creatures beginning their turn in these squares. Any creature under the beetle's body when it crashes to the ground can attempt a DC 22 Reflex save (DC 25 in Subtier 14–15) to leap to the nearest square that is not under the falling beetle. Creatures that fail the save take 10d6 points of damage and are pinned. Pinned PCs can work themselves free by spending a full-round action and succeeding at a DC 28 Escape Artist or combat maneuver check. Pinned retrievers can escape by burrowing into the ground, and if the Hive Mind is pinned, it can escape by discorporating into a swarm of vermin.

Riftcarver. At the back of the demon beetle's stomach is a chitinous scythe embedded into a mound of tumorous growths. Cautious adventurers would do well to examine the area thoroughly before drawing the weapon, but some PCs might be tempted to draw the scythe mid-battle.

Knowing that his movements would attract attention, Koth'Vaul deliberately created a trail of deception leading to this scythe as a way to thwart his pursuers. The scythe in this area is a perfect copy of *Riftcarver* in every respect save one—it is sized for a typical human wielder, whereas the true *Riftcarver* is a gargantuan weapon. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Knowledge (planes) check while examining the scythe realizes that this weapon is much too small, which serves as a clue that something is amiss.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Spellcraft check identifies the scythe as *Riftcarver*, a *+5 defending unholy wounding scythe*. Only a PC who succeeds at a DC 40 Spellcraft check realizes that the weapon is actually a *–2 cursed scythe*; this weapon's properties function identically to those of a *–2 cursed sword*.

Trap: In addition to the curse, a powerful *harm* trap is laid upon the scythe, triggered by any creature other than the Eternal Hive that touches the weapon.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 17)

HIVE MIND **CR 14**

CE human worm that walks conjurer 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 286; see page 28)

hp 113

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight, +4 shield)

Spells 1st—replace *charm person* with *mage armor*

Combat Gear *staff of locusts* (see below), **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance +4*, *ring of protection +2*

TACTICS

Before Combat The Hive Mind stands 15 feet away from the mouth of the beetle and uses *project image* to create an illusory duplicate in the front of the mouth. It also casts *mage armor*, *fly*, *invisibility*, and *shield* in case it needs to enter battle directly.

During Combat The Hive Mind aims to control and confuse the battlefield, using *summon monster* spells as well as battlefield control spells like *cloudkill* and *black tentacles* to disrupt the flow of combat. Because *summon monster* spells can rapidly add to the complexity of an already complex encounter, GMs are free to limit its use of summons as much as they feel is appropriate for their table. In general, it prefers to summon creatures that it particularly enjoys commanding—demons and good outsiders are its favorite.

Morale The Hive Mind fights until destroyed.

Base Statistics Without *fly*, *mage armor*, and *shield*, the Hive Mind's statistics are **Speed** 30 ft.; **AC** 19, touch 17, flat-footed 12.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Staff of Locusts This augmented *staff of swarming insects* is the hive mind's arcane bond. This *+1 quarterstaff* is made of the compacted husks of thousands of locusts. While holding the staff, the wielder gains DR 5/— against the attacks of swarms. Melee attacks made with

The Eternal Hive

the staff deal double damage to all swarms, even those that would normally be immune to weapon damage. In addition, any time the wielder casts a spell or uses an ability that summons a swarm, he can spend one charge from the staff as a swift action to add 1d6 to the swarm's damage and increase the save DCs to resist its effects by 2. The staff allows the use of *summon swarm* (1 charge) and *insect plague* (3 charges).

RETRIEVERS (3) **CR 11**

hp 137 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 234; see page 28)

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); *spider climb*

Int 11

Skills Perception +15, Stealth +12

TACTICS

Before Combat The retrievers burrow beneath the ground, ready to ambush the PCs.

During Combat If undetected, the burrowed retrievers delay acting until roughly half the PCs have acted, hoping that melee fighters will rush off to battle the beetle. They then burst forth and attack isolated or vulnerable PCs. The retriever inside the beetle stays to defend the worm that walks from melee combatants.

Morale Loyal to the hive, the retrievers fight to the death.

HARM TRAP **CR 14**

Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*harm*, +8 melee touch, 130 points of damage, Will DC 19 half, target cannot be reduced to less than 1 hit point)

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 19)

HIVE MIND **CR 16**

Human worm that walks conjurer 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 286)

CE Medium vermin

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 19, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight, +4 shield) **hp** 160 (15d6+105); fast healing 16

Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities worm that walks traits; **DR** 15/—; **Immune** critical hits, disease, flanking, paralysis, poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; fly 60 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d4–1 plus grab)

Special Attacks discorporate, grab (Large), squirming embrace, tenacious

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)
At will—dimensional steps (450 feet/day)
10/day—acid dart (1d6+7 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +22)
8th—quickened *black tentacles, maze*
7th—quickened *dispel magic*, *plane shift* (DC 25), *project image* (DC 24), *spell turning*
6th—*acid fog*, *disintegrate* (3, DC 24), *summon monster VI*
5th—*cloudkill* (DC 23), *dismissal* (DC 22), quickened *obscuring mist*, *shadow evocation* (DC 22), *telekinesis* (DC 23), *teleport*
4th—*black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 21), *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (2, DC 21), *summon monster IV*
3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *protection from energy* (2), *slow* (DC 21), *stinking cloud* (DC 21), *summon monster III*
2nd—*acid arrow* (2), *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 20), *invisibility*, *summon swarm*
1st—*feather fall*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *reduce person* (DC 19), *shield*
0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*
Opposition Schools evocation, necromancy

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 21, **Int** 24, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 27 (can't be tripped)

Feats Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wondrous Item, Diehard[B], Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (transmutation), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Craft (alchemy) +25, Diplomacy +15, Fly +22, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +25, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Perception +24, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +12, Survival +16; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal

SQ arcane bond (*staff of locusts*), summoner's charm (7 rounds)

Combat Gear *staff of locusts* (see Subtier 12–13); **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance +4, headband of vast intelligence* +6 (Diplomacy, Knowledge [religion], Survival), *ring of protection +2*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Discorporate (Su) A worm that walks can collapse into a shapeless swarm of worms as a free action. All held, worn, and carried items fall and its Strength score drops to 1. The worm that walks functions as a true swarm while discorporated, with a reach of 0 feet (its space remains unchanged). While discorporated, the worm that walks loses all of its defensive abilities and gains all of the standard swarm traits. It loses its slam attacks and all special abilities and special attacks, but it can make a swarm attack that deals damage equal to its engulf attack. A worm that walks can reform into its true form (including equipping all gear in reach) as a full-round action as long as it has at least 1 hit point.

Squirming Embrace (Ex) If a worm that walks grapples a foe, as a swift action, it can cause a swarm of worms to squirm over the grappled creature. These worms deal 3d6 automatic

Scaling Picking Up the Trail

For groups of four PCs, lower all skill check DCs by 3.

swarm damage with no attack roll needed. If a creature takes damage from the swarm, it must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round.

A worm that walks can have only one embraced target at a time, but it does not have to continue grappling in order to maintain the embrace. If the worm that walks moves more than 5 feet from the swarm or dismisses the swarm (a free action), the swarm dies. Any area attack that damages the swarm or any severe or stronger wind effect that affects the swarm's target kills it.

Tenacious (Ex) A worm that walks gains a +4 racial bonus on combat maneuver checks to grapple and a +4 racial bonus to its CMD.

Worm that Walks Traits A worm that walks has no discernible anatomy, and is not subject to critical hits or flanking. Reducing a worm that walks to 0 hit points causes it to discorporate (see below)—a worm that walks at 0 hit points is staggered, and one at negative hit points is dying. Worms that walk are immune to any physical spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of such spells and effects generated by the worm that walks itself, which treat the worm that walks as one single creature if it so chooses. Mind-affecting effects that target single creatures function normally against a worm that walks, since the creature's individual components share a hive mind. A worm that walks takes half again as much damage (+50%) from damaging area effects, such as *fireball* and splash weapons. Worms that walk are susceptible to high winds—treat a worm that walks as a Fine creature for the purposes of determining wind effects.

HIVE RETRIEVERS (4) **CR 12**

Advanced retrievers (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 234)

CE Huge construct (extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+5 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

hp 150 (17d10+57); fast healing 5

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); *spider climb*

Melee bite +21 (1d8+6 plus grab), 4 claws +21 (2d6+6/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks eye rays (+20 ranged touch)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

At will—*discern location*

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +25 (+29 bull rush, grapple); **CMD** 40 (42 vs. bull rush, 44 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Great Fortitude, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+13 when jumping), Perception +19, Stealth +14

Languages Abyssal (can't speak)

SQ relentless

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eye Rays (Su) A retriever's eyes can produce four different magical rays, each with a range of 100 feet. Each round, it can fire one ray as a free action. A particular ray is usable only once every 4 rounds. A retriever can fire an eye ray in the same round that it makes physical attacks. Firing an eye ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The save DC for eye rays is 20; this save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. The eye ray effects are the following.

Fire: Deals 12d6 points of fire damage (Reflex half).

Cold: Deals 12d6 points of cold damage (Reflex half).

Electricity: Deals 12d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex half).

Petrification: Target must succeed at a Fortitude save or turn to stone permanently.

Relentless (Su) A retriever is constantly under the effects of *spider climb* and *water walk*; these abilities cannot be dispelled.

HARM TRAP **CR 16**

Type magic; **Perception** DC 33; **Disable Device** DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*harm*, +10 melee touch, 150 points of damage, Will DC 19 half, target cannot be reduced to less than 1 hit point)

Rewards: If the PCs do not defeat the Eternal Hive, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 4,083 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 5,583 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 7,083 gp.

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

After exploring the area and discovering the false *Riftcarver*, the PCs must uncover the true trail of Koth'Vaul. They can accomplish this task by interrogating the remnants of the Eternal Hive or by gathering clues. The following are three likely means the PCs can use to follow Koth'Vaul.

The Fleeing Hive: Even with all its major components dead, the Eternal Hive still maintains some semblance of life in the form of thousands of parasitic grubs living within the demon beetle. Several minutes after the Eternal Hive is defeated, these

parasites burrow out of the corpse, gather into a quivering swarm, and attempt to crawl away to safety. They pose no real threat to the PCs at this point, but if allowed to escape, they will eventually gather strength and re-form the Eternal Hive. If confronted, the grubs abase themselves and beg for mercy, offering information on Koth'Vaul in exchange for life.

The grubs know several useful pieces of information. First, they can relate how Koth'Vaul helped the Eternal Hive slay several demonic generals of Deskari that were vying for control The Rasping Rifts. In exchange, the Eternal Hive agreed to battle any enemies of Koth'Vaul that came to this place. Second, the grubs do not know that the scythe is cursed, but they do know that it is fake and trapped. And third, the grubs know Koth'Vaul's true plan; the glabrezu intends to become a true demon lord by traveling to the Rift of Repose and devouring a heart from the corpse of Deskari. The grubs offer to the lead the PCs to Koth'Vaul's portal to the Rift of Repose in exchange for mercy.

Tracks: Although Koth'Vaul was careful to obscure his passage, tracks from demon and his followers still mark the ground. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Survival check (DC 34 in Subtier 14–25) uncovers tracks hidden beneath insect husks, which lead to a ruined tower further down the canyon that contains a glowing portal to the Rift of Repose. A failed Survival check leads the PCs down a side path in the canyon that loops back to the Chasm of Crawling Consumption (see page 7).

Ritual: Before venturing to the Rift of Repose, Koth'Vaul took shelter with the Eternal Hive and cast a powerful ritual to aid him in his upcoming trial. A *detect magic* spell cast here reveals the lingering presence of overwhelming necromancy and abjuration magic. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Knowledge (arcana) check or Spellcraft check while examining the area (DC 34 in Subtier 14–15) uncovers that the spell was designed both shield the caster from harm and also draw power from the remains of a dead demon lord. A PC with this knowledge who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check remembers that dead demon lords are bound to the Rift of Repose, making this a natural location to investigate next.

B. THE RIFT OF REPOSE (CR 16 OR CR 18)

After passing through the portal, the PCs arrive at a scene of destruction.

The walls of the ravine extend upwards for thousands of feet. A massive, petrified tail runs through the middle of the chasm, standing twenty feet high. On the canyon's steep walls, the fossilized remains of Deskari and two other slain demon lords loom like titanic monoliths carved from the stone of the rift. Gaping wounds rend the breast of each demon lord and gouts of black ichor gush through the cracks. As the ichor falls to the canyon floor, it warps and twists, transforming into hordes of shrieking demons. Wading through these hordes and fighting them back with powerful blows are a handful of enormous boar-headed demons. The boar demons are steadily laying waste to the gibbering masses, driving the demon hordes back to their source.

Seemingly able to sense the presence of mortal life, the demon hordes begin to close in. Suddenly, a second mass of insectoid demons rise from the blood of Deskari and begins to tear at the small incoming fiends. A small circle of safety forms within the tumultuous battlefield.

Scaling the Rift of Repose

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

Subtier 12–13: The Curator is already weakened by battle when the PCs arrive. It has 50 fewer hit points and only three uses of its mythic power remaining.

Subtier 14–15: Both Curators are weakened as above.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12–13: Apply the advanced simple template to the Curator. Once per turn, the Curator can expend one use of mythic power to make an attack using its Awesome Blow feat as a swift action. This also triples the distance that creatures are knocked back.

Subtier 14–15: Both Curators gain the benefits as above.

As evidenced by the total chaos, the PCs have arrived too late to stop Koth'Vaul's plan entirely. The glabrezu successfully unleashed horrific magic to tear open Deskari's stone breast and devour one of the demon lord's hearts. This spell was so cataclysmic that it blasted wounds into two adjacent corpses in the rift, each the remains of a forgotten demon lord killed long ago. Demonic ichor now spills from the stone wounds of the demons, and each drop that reaches the chasm floor gives birth to demonic life, spawning thousands of winged dretches and other monstrosities.

Creatures: Since time immemorial, nalfeshnee guardians called Curators have watched over the Rift of Repose. Through careful planning and deceptive magic, Koth'Vaul was able to avoid their attention long enough to complete his task, but now several Curators have arrived and are working to seal the demon-spawning wounds. Two Curators remain in the distance within the dretch hordes, while one moves to intercept and kill the PCs. In Subtier 14–15, an additional Curator is present and also moves to attack the PCs.

Regardless of how the PCs' battle goes, the two Curators battling dretches reach the demon-spawning wounds after 6 rounds of combat and sacrifice themselves to seal them shut once more. These Curators will eventually reform, but not for many months. This act stops new dretches from forming, but it does not eliminate the horde that already exists.

B. The Rift of Repose
PCs Start Here
C1
C2
C : Curator
: Safe Zone
1 square = 5 feet

Deskari's Blessing: Though dead, the soul of Deskari still broods within the titanic corpse melded into the Rift of Repose. Upon the PCs' arrival, Deskari recognizes them as potential allies and uses all of his remaining power to aid them. He has limited control over the insectoid dretches spawned from his blood but is able to limit their bloodlust for a brief time. He directs them to form a sphere around the PCs, keeping the other dretches at bay. This keeps the dretches from entering the safe area marked on the map.

He also sends a swarm of protective insects to surround each PC and absorb blows. These insects grant each PC 40 temporary hit points and DR 2/epic for the duration of the encounter. Additionally, the Curator (or Curators in Subtier 14–15) takes 5d6 points of damage per round from swarming insects. The aid the PCs receive from Deskari reduces the CR of the encounter by 1.

Hazard: A horde of screaming demons surrounds the PCs this fight, depicted by the shaded region on the map. The demons deal 5d6+1 points of damage to each creature that begins its turn inside the horde. Additionally, they also make a grapple attempt (+19 CMB in Subtier 12–13 or +21 CMB in Subtier 14–15) and attempt to hold targets indefinitely, rending them to shreds. The dretch horde takes 50% extra damage from area effects, and each 5-foot square of the horde has 20 hit points. Killing dretches temporarily clears an affected area and frees any grappled creatures held there, but the cleared space refills with new dretches again after 1 round.

In addition to the horde shown on the map, the skies are also filled with winged dretches. Creatures flying more than 60 feet into the air are subject to the hazard above.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 16)

CURATOR **CR 17/MR 7**

Mythic nalfeshnee (*Pathfinder Mythic Adventures* 183; see page 27)

hp 287

TACTICS

During Combat The Curator wades into combat and makes frequent use of its mythic power attack and touch of chaos abilities. If possible, it uses its Awesome Blow feat to knock PCs into the demon horde.

Morale The Curator is bound to the Rift of Repose and will eventually reform if slain. It fights to the death.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 18)

CURATORS (2) **CR 17/MR 7**

Mythic nalfeshnee (*Pathfinder Mythic Adventures* 183; see page 27)

hp 287

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

Treasure: The Curators are festooned with skulls and jewelry gathered from slain trespassers. The curator who attacks the PCs has a particularly valuable trophy—a unique sword known as the *corona blade*. The Curator took this weapon from a paladin's corpse several centuries ago. While it was once a *sun blade*, long exposure to the nalfeshnee has begun to corrupt its essence. While the blade retains most of its typical abilities (including its effectiveness against evil creatures), its effectiveness against undead and creatures from the Negative Energy Plane has been replaced by effectiveness against creatures with a strong lawful aura. Additionally, its ability to replicate natural daylight has been replaced by a once-per-day use of the nalfeshnee's unholy nimbus ability with a duration of 1d3 rounds (Will DC 20 negates). The Curator cannot safely wield the blade, so it instead uses the weapon as a snout piercing from which to dangle skulls. If they wish, any PC who succeeds at a disarm attempt during combat can draw the blade from the demon's snout. In Subtier 14–15, the Curator who does not have the *corona blade* wears a necklace of gem-studded skulls worth a total of 24,000 gp. Most of this value comes from a magical gem in the central skull—a *pearl of power* (4th level).

Scaling Deskari's Bargain

For a group of four PCs, reduce the DC of all saving throws and skill checks in Deskari's Bargain by 2.

Meeting Your God

If any PCs are worshippers of Deskari, the demon lord's tone in this conversation is different. He expects such a PC to be deferential to him, but he is not blind to the long tradition of underlings in the Abyss seizing a chance to destroy and usurp their leaders. He carefully gauges such PCs' intentions using his significant skill at detecting deception (Sense Motive +46). If a Deskari-worshipping PC directly defies the demon lord, including refusing to accept his blood or heart, that PC experiences a few moments of excruciating pain, followed immediately by the loss all divine spellcasting and other character abilities that come directly from Deskari. He then offers to give the power back if the PC falls back in line. If such PCs show the proper deference, however, Deskari may share with them more of his motives and intentions, such as the likely effects of accepting the heart.

Rewards: If the PCs do not defeat the Curator (or Curators, in Subtier 14–15), reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 4,194 gp.
Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 5,528 gp.
Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 6,861 gp.

DESKARI'S BARGAIN

After the battle, Deskari's minions battle the remaining dretches while the demon lord reaches out communicates with the PCs telepathically.

"Halt," a hissing voice whispers telepathically. The voice seems to emanate from the fossilized demon-insect projecting from the wall of the rift. A tunneling wound filled with crawling insects, bores through the chest of the fossil, emitting a dull red glow. Near the back of the tunnel, a massive heart beats rhythmically. Embedded in the walls of the wound, a scattering of large gems glitter.

The voice continues, "I am Deskari, Lord of the Locust Host. Though my body is shattered, my essence lives on here in the Rift of Repose. The glabrezu Koth'Vaul has used powerful magic to rend my breast and devour my heart, stealing my power. He now thinks himself my equal and seeks to create a domain of his own. Only I can provide the power you need to defeat him. In exchange, I require only that you destroy Koth'Vaul utterly: flense his flesh and leave his plans in ruins."

Though now only a shadow of his former glory, like all slain demon lords, Deskari's essence lingers on in the Rift of Repose even after death. He has no power to enact vengeance on his own, but he hopes to make a bargain with the mortals that just arrived before him. If any of the PCs are suffering from negative effects brought about by the Chasm of Crawling Consumption, Deskari notices immediately and mentions (truthfully) that accepting his heart or blood would immediately eliminate those effects. He answers questions as shown below. Deskari is a haughty and cunning demon lord. Despite his diminished state, he views himself as superior to all other creatures.

What is this place? "This is the Rift of Repose. When demon lords die, their essence is too mighty to vanish entirely. Instead, they return here, becoming part of this place for eternity."

What happened to you? Discussing his own defeat angers Deskari, and questions like these provoke an aggressive response: "What does it look like? Treacherous mortals killed me! You would be wise to ask me no more of this matter."

Why are you helping us? Deskari's voice swells with rage, "Koth'Vaul is no true demon lord. He is a lesser demon—a servant only, unfit for rule. He thinks that he can steal my essence without repercussions?" Deskari continues quietly and menacingly, "He is mistaken."

How can we defeat Koth'Vaul? "The glabrezu is unstoppable now without my aid. With my heart beating in his chest, he cannot be killed by mortal means. Worse still, he has shared his blood with his followers. Together, they can shape and control this plane. If you battle him, they will use the very Abyss itself to fight against you. Luckily for you, I still have great power, and I am willing to share it with you."

What power can you offer us? "I can offer my blood or another of my hearts. If you accept my blood, you will gain great power for a limited time—abilities matched only by mortal heroes of myth and legend. Even the Abyss will bend more easily to your will.

If you desire true power, then you can accept the gift of my heart. Your powers and your life will then will be eternal. The Abyss will recognize you as one who could rise to the mantle of demon lord, making you just as effective as Koth'Vaul as shaping its essence. Only one of you, the worthiest among you, may accept this gift."

What's the catch? Deskari laughs, a hollow rasping sound accompanied by the hum of a buzzing swarm. "The catch? Power always has a price. The more you seize, the stronger the hordes become that are determined to destroy and consume you. The more you take, the more feeble beings cry to you with their prayers, and the more your enemies draw strength from ending their mewling lives. And, of course, if you accept power from one who is stronger than you, you might owe that one a debt. Even those gods that demand 'charity' of their followers still demand obeisance and the promise of future souls before they share a drop of their power. In this case, however, you will be acting as vessels of my power to achieve

my own ends, which happen to coincide with your own. I demand nothing further."

Deskari is bending the truth here, particularly if a PC takes the heart. He is counting on the power contained within his heart to overwhelm that PC's will to the extent that his ends, by default, will coincide with that PC's own. Although the PCs may be suspicious of the demon lord, directly catching him in a lie is nearly impossible, requiring a successful DC 56 Sense Motive check.

Development: After their conversation with Deskari, the PCs are free to pursue one of four options, as described below.

Accept the Blood of Deskari: With this option, Deskari calls forth blood from his open wound and bids each PC to prick a finger and allow his noble blood to mingle with theirs. Performing this action grants demonic might, as outlined in **Handout #3** (see page 25), and it also removes any penalties the PC has from the Chasm of Crawling Consumption. Contact with such concentrated evil comes at a cost, however, and causes something good or joyful to fade from affected PCs forever. As each PC accepts the offering of blood, have them briefly describe their happiest memory of triumph or joy. The touch of evil wipes this memory from their minds forever.

Accept the Heart of Deskari: With this option, Deskari calls forth his beating heart and hands it to the PC. "Eat it, and it will reform within you," Deskari instructs. If a PC takes a bite of the heart, give only that player **Handout #2** (see page 24). If the player tells you that they continue to eat the heart after this point, give her **Handout #4** (see page 26). In the unlikely event that multiple PCs insist on eating the heart, have those PCs each attempt Will saves; the PC with the highest result receives the vision and the choice first. As with accepting the blood, agreeing to this offer wipes a joyful memory from the mind of each PC who takes even a single bite of the heart. In addition, however, fully consuming the heart binds the PC to the Abyss forever. This is meant to be a capstone event in the career of the PC, a moment of ultimate sacrifice and attainment of immense power. On the other hand, if the PC stops eating the heart, she gains only the benefits of the blood (give that player **Handout #3**), but she will be free to return from the Abyss after the adventure. In this case, Deskari attempts to tempt another PC into finishing the heart. Repeat this cycle until all PCs have rejected Deskari or someone has consumed the heart. Only one character can fully consume the heart. Consuming any amount of Deskari's heart removes any penalties the PC has from the Chasm of Crawling Consumption.

Steal Deskari's Power: It is likely that some PCs will entirely reject the idea of bargaining with a demon. In this case, a PCs who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) or Spellcraft check realizes that Deskari is still greatly weakened by Koth'Vaul's magic. Rather than accepting the demon lord's offer, the PCs could instead steal his power for themselves. Deskari resists these attempts, of course, causing swarming insects to inflict harm on any who dare defile his corpse. There are three primary methods of advancing toward the heart, as highlighted below.

- A PC can attempt a DC 22 Reflex saving throw to avoid the stinging insects.
- A PC can attempt a DC 22 Fortitude saving throw to focus on strengthening her body against the attacks.
- A PC can attempt a DC 22 Will saving throw to subjugate the stinging insects through force of will.

With each success, the PC advances closer to the heart. On a failure, he does not advance and is stung, taking 1d4 points of Constitution damage. PCs can attempt these saves as many times as they like, although repeating a saving throw of the same type increases the DC by 5 with each new attempt. The essence of Deskari responds only to power and

Scaling the Final Confrontation

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of four PCs.

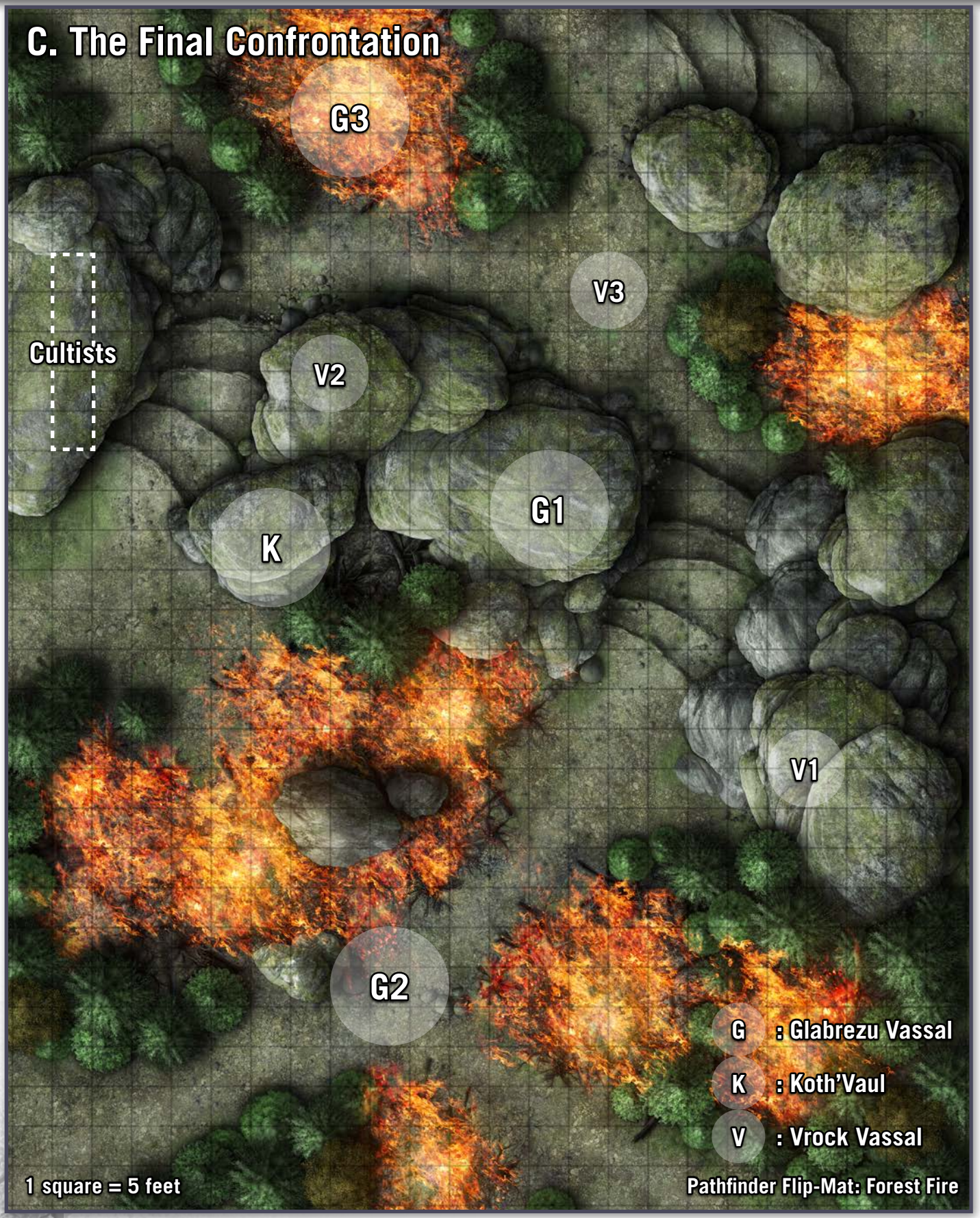
Subtier 12–13: Remove one vrock. Koth'Vaul's mistrust of his demonic servitors has woven itself into the fabric of this part of the Abyss—they cannot help him control the plane, reducing the starting threshold for successfully manipulating the plane to 3 successes. The effort of building his new realm severely taxes Koth'Vaul's concentration, giving him the sickened condition and lowering his SR to 28.

Subtier 14–15: Remove one glabrezu vassal. Koth'Vaul's mistrust of his demonic servitors has woven itself into the fabric of this part of the Abyss—they cannot help him control the plane, reducing the starting threshold for successfully manipulating the plane to 3 successes. The effort of building his new realm severely taxes Koth'Vaul's concentration, giving him the sickened condition and lowering his SR to 30.

Make the following changes for groups that explicitly agreed to a greater challenge.

Subtier 12–13: Add two additional vrock vassals. Koth'Vaul can expend one use of mythic power as a part of casting one of the following spell-like abilities to cast their mythic versions: *chaos hammer*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *unholy blight*, and *power word stun*. Additionally, all five followers have Koth'Vaul's glyph on their foreheads, though two of the runes glow gold. These two followers are linked to Koth'Vaul through a variant of *shield other*—any time Koth'Vaul would take damage, it is instead distributed evenly among him and whichever of those followers is still alive.

Subtier 14–15: As the adjustments for Subtier 12–13, except instead of adding two vrock vassals, add four vrock vassals and an additional glabrezu vassal.


C. The Final Confrontation
G3
Cultists
V3
V2
G1
K
V1
G2
G : Glabrezu Vassal
K : Koth'Vaul
V : Vrock Vassal
1 square = 5 feet
Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Forest Fire

force of will, so attempts to use magic or trickery to reach Deskari's heart in place of saving throws automatically fail. After achieving two successful saves, the PC reaches the heart of Deskari and can touch it to extract power. This provides the same benefit as accepting the blood of Deskari but leaves the PC's memories intact.

Rebuke Deskari: Finally, the PCs may decide to refuse Deskari's offer and eschew the opportunity to steal his power. If they do, they gain no benefits in the fight against Koth'Vaul, and any penalties from the Chasm of Crawling Consumption remain.

C. THE FINAL CONFRONTATION (CR 18 OR CR 20)

After they gain power from Deskari, the PCs are finally ready to battle Koth'Vaul. If they agreed to help Deskari, he directs them to a nearby gash in the rift, which serves as portal to a distant corner of the Abyss that Koth'Vaul is attempting to claim as his own. Alternatively, PCs could find the portal on their own with a successful DC 20 Survival check—believing himself to be invincible now, Koth'Vaul has stopped covering his tracks. The portal itself appears as an inky wall of blackness. When the PCs arrive on the other side, read or paraphrase the following.

The remains of twisted trees dot the landscape of this blasted hillside. Swirling storms of chaos, filled with gouts of black flame, rage amid the trees.

Having completed his full plan, Koth'Vaul is now using his immense powers to shape this region to his whims. He has only just begun the process, however, so storms of raw Abyssal chaos are erupting across the battlefield.

Manipulating the Plane: Before his ascension, Koth'Vaul gathered his most loyal and corrupted minions. In preparation for absorbing Deskari's heart, the demon used magic to remove his own heart and fed a portion of it to each of his followers. This bestowed them with some of his demonic essence and allows them to aid him in the creation of his new realm. Unfortunately for Koth'Vaul, mortals of sufficient power can also influence a realm that is in flux, which allows the PCs a chance to take control of the plane as well.

At the start of each round of combat, allow each character attempting to manipulate the plane to attempt a power check by rolling 1d20 and adding a bonus equal the PC's character level. The DC for the power check is 28 for Subtier 12–13 and 30 for Subtier 14–15. PCs who accepted Deskari's blood gain a +5 bonus on their power check. A PC whose result exceeds the DC by 5 or more earns 2 successes. A PC who accepted Deskari's heart automatically succeeds at the check and earns 2 successes. If the PCs earn at least 4 successes, they can change the Abyss to suit their whims. If the PCs earn 4 or fewer successes, Koth'Vaul targets PCs with an effect. This means that if the PCs earn exactly 4 successes, both sides of the fight get to trigger an effect. The threshold for overwhelming Koth'Vaul's influence drops as the PCs defeat Koth'Vaul's minions. The number of successes needed decreases by 1 if the PCs defeat all of Koth'Vaul's demon vassals, and it also decreases by 1 if the PCs defeat or incapacitate all of his human servants.

Some examples of potential effects are provided below. For ease of play, Koth'Vaul always selects one of the first four choices.

- *Quake:* Each creature standing in a 20-foot radius must attempt a DC 20 Reflex save or fall prone. Fissures open in the earth, and every creature on the ground has a 25% chance to fall into one (Reflex DC 20 avoids). The fissures are 40 feet deep. At the end of the round, all fissures grind shut. Treat all trapped creatures as if they were in the bury zone of an avalanche, trapped without air (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429). In Subtier 14–15, increase the DC of the Reflex save by 2.
- *Meteor Strike:* Two meteors strike the battlefield, as per the spell *meteor swarm*.
- *Acid Bubble:* An Abyssal bubble bursts, spraying acid on all creatures within a 20-foot radius. This deals 10d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 21 half). In Subtier 14–15, the damage increases to 13d6, and the saving throw DC increases to 23.
- *Abyssal Minions:* The dirt of the Abyss squirms with life, as a 20-foot-radius spread of grasping claws springs from the ground. This functions like a *black tentacles* spell (CL 15th, or CL 17th in Subtier 14–15).
- *Other:* The PCs could potentially create other effects, such as altering terrain features or even creating crude structures from thin air. Allow them some leeway in how they decide to shape the Abyss, especially if it creates fun or cinematic effects.

Chaos Storms: Each of the areas of fire on the map is a chaos storm, filled with raw Abyssal energy that manifests as swirling torrents of oily, black flame. Creatures that begin their turn within a chaos storm take 3d6 points of damage. This is not fire damage, and it harms all non-demon creatures. The raw Abyss inside the chaos storms also helps the PCs manipulate the plane, granting a PC who is in a chaos storm at the beginning of a round a +2 bonus on power checks.

Creatures: In Subtier 12–13, three vrock vassals protect Koth'Vaul. In Subtier 14–15, three glabrezu vassals guard him instead. To deal with any flying foes, Koth'Vaul has previously used *wish* spells to give himself and each of his glabrezu followers (in Subtier 14–15) wings.

Five mortal servants have followed Koth'Vaul on his mission to the Abyss. In a past life, each of these mortals was an influential political figure. Now each is little more than a pawn in Koth'Vaul's machinations. The mortal followers do

not take part in combat, but they do play a strategic role in the battle. First, the five followers help Koth'Vaul vie for control of the plane each round. Second, three of the followers are marked with the glowing red rune of Koth'Vaul. This mark indicates that they are storing an active *wish* spell ready to assist Koth'Vaul (see Koth'Vaul's unhindered ability on page 21). These *wish* spells could play a pivotal role in the combat, so be sure to emphasize that the glowing marks fade with each *wish* used. The PCs can remove a rune with a targeted *dispel magic* against Koth'Vaul's caster level.

Although the followers each have unique stories and abilities, treat all of the followers as if they had the following statistics for simplicity: **AC** 23, touch 16, flat-footed 19; **hp** 89; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11. The followers remain stationary and take no actions in combat other than to pray to Koth'Vaul and activate his *wishes* when the time is right. They can use a free action to activate these *wish* spells even when it is not their turn.

SUBTIER 12–13 (CR 18)

KOTH'VAUL **CR 16/MR 6**

Unique glabrezu (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 61)
CE Huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, mythic)
Init +10[M]; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 10, flat-footed 32 (+24 natural, +2 Dex, –2 size)
hp 258 (12d10+192)
Fort +24, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18
DR 10/epic and good; **Immune** charm effects, compulsion effects, death effects, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, fire 30; **SR** 30
Defensive Abilities Deskari's wing, mirror dodge, unhindered

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee bite +24 (1d8+14), 2 claws +24 (1d6+14), 2 pincers +24 (2d8+14/19–20)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Special Attacks mythic power (8/day, surge +1d8), rend (2 pincers, 2d8+21)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +24)
Constant—*true seeing*
At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 22), *confusion* (DC 22), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *mirror image*, *reverse gravity*, *unholy blight* (DC 22), *veil* (self only; DC 24)
1/day—*power word stun*, summon (level 5, 1d4+1 vrock vassals 100%)
1/month—*wish* (already used)

TACTICS

During Combat Recognizing that the time for subtlety is over, Koth'Vaul attacks with brutal ferocity, making use of his mythic Power Attack feat. He uses mirror dodge as often as possible to avoid taking damage and reposition himself near vulnerable enemies. Koth'Vaul does not use his summon ability; the demons he could call forth with that ability are already physically present.
Morale This is Koth'Vaul's final scheme, and he fights until destroyed to see it through.

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 15, **Con** 33, **Int** 20, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 26
Base Atk +12; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 40
Feats Extra Mythic Power[M], Improved Critical (pincer), Improved Initiative[M], Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack[M], Vital Strike
Skills Acrobatics +12 (+16 when jumping), Bluff +31, Diplomacy +27, Fly +8, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (local) +20, Perception +28, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +7, Use Magic Device +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Gnome; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear *belt of physical might +2* (Strength and Dexterity)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deskari's Wing (Su) Koth'Vaul has grafted one of Deskari's wings to his back. This grants him a +5 resistance bonus on all saving throws. Additionally, whenever a creature damages Koth'Vaul with an attack that deals bludgeoning, force, piercing, or slashing damage, the wing releases a discordant scraping and rasping sound. All non-demon creatures within 10 feet of Koth'Vaul must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic effect, and the save DC is Constitution-based.

Mirror Dodge (Su) When hit by a melee or ranged attack, Koth'Vaul can expend one use of mythic power as an immediate action to replace himself with an illusory duplicate and teleport to any open square within 30 feet of his current position. He takes no damage from this attack, which instead destroys his illusory duplicate (like *mirror image*). Using this ability requires a line of effect to the square he teleports into.

Unhindered (Sp) Using dark magic, Koth'Vaul has "stored" a handful of *wish* spells over the years, which can be triggered by his marked mortal servants. Each time Koth'Vaul fails a saving throw against or is otherwise affected by an effect that would hinder his ability to act freely, one of his marked followers can call out as a free action, "Koth'Vaul! I wish to free you as promised long ago!" This removes the effect automatically. Each of Koth'Vaul's five mortal servants had a contingent *wish* spell in place, but Koth'Vaul used two of them in previous combats, meaning only three contingent spells remain. If a marked mortal follower is slain or incapacitated before his or her *wish* is used, the spell is wasted. This cannot protect Koth'Vaul from falling unconscious from hit point damage.

VROCK VASSALS (3) **CR 11**

Advanced vrock fighter 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288, 69)

CE Large outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +13 natural, –1 size)

hp 145 each (10d10+91)

Fort +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee bite +16 (1d8+7), 2 claws +17 (2d6+7), 2 talons +16 (1d6+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks dance of ruin, spores, stunning screech

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *telekinesis* (DC 20)

1/day—*heroism* (already used), *mirror image* (already used), summon (level 3, 1 vrock 35%; already used)

TACTICS

Before Combat The vrocks have already used their most powerful spells while battling in the Rift of Repose.

During Combat The vrocks fly into melee immediately. One vrock uses stunning screech each round.

Morale The vrocks serve Koth'Vaul, but their loyalty is not absolute. If reduced to 15 hit points or less, they teleport away.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 19, **Con** 29, **Int** 18, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +11, Fly +15, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +26, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +13, Survival +18; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Elven, Gnome; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dancing Ruin (Su) A vrock can dance and chant as a full-round action—at the end of 3 rounds, a crackling wave of energy explodes from the vrock, dealing 5d6 points of electricity damage to all creatures within 100 feet. A DC 17 Reflex save halves this damage. For each additional vrock that joins in the dance, the damage increases by 5d6 and the DC to avoid the effect increases by +1, to a maximum of 20d6 when four or more vrocks are dancing (the DC continues to increase with additional vrocks, but the damage does not). The dance immediately ends and must be started anew if any of the participating vrocks is slain, stunned, or otherwise prevented from dancing. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spores (Ex) A vrock can release a cloud of spores from its body once every 3 rounds as a free action. Adjacent creatures take 1d8 points of damage from the spores, plus 1d4 points of damage per round for 10 rounds as the spores grow into thick green vines. Although ugly, the vines are harmless and wither away in 1d4 days if not shaved off before then. The spores can be destroyed by casting bless on the affected creatures or by sprinkling them with holy water. Effects that remove or provide immunity to disease can also halt this attack.

Stunning Screech (Su) Once per hour, a vrock can emit a shrill screech. All creatures except demons within a 30-foot-radius spread must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

SUBTIER 14–15 (CR 20)

GLABREZU VASSALS (3) **CR 13**

Glabrezu (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 61; see page 27)

hp 186 each

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Scaling Sealing the Wound

To accommodate a group of four PCs, lower the DC of all skill checks by 3. Additionally, remove one of the Knowledge (planes) checks, for a total of five skill checks, and reduce the ritual's duration to 50 minutes. The PCs need only succeed at three or more of these checks to successfully seal the rift.

TACTICS

Before Combat Wary of possible attacks, the glabrezu vassals keep a *mirror image* spell active at all times. They expended their *wish* earlier in the month and do not have it available in this combat.

During Combat The glabrezu vassals focus on melee. If a target survives one round of attacks, the demons like to follow up with a *power word stun* on the next round, hoping to stun a greatly injured foe.

Morale The demons serve Koth'Vaul, but their loyalty is not absolute. If reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, they teleport away.

KOTH'VAUL **CR 18/MR 6**

Unique glabrezu (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 61)

CE Huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, mythic)

Init +10[M], **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +29

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 10, flat-footed 32 (+24 natural, +2 Dex, –2 size)

hp 307 (15d10+225)

Fort +25, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17

DR 10/epic and good; **Immune** charm, compulsion, death effects, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, fire 30; **SR** 32

Defensive Abilities Deskari's wing, unhindered

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee bite +27 (1d8+14), 2 claws +27 (1d6+14), 2 pincers +27 (3d8+14/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks mythic power (8/day, surge +1d8), rend (2 pincers, 2d8+21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +29)

Constant—*true seeing*

At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 25), *confusion* (DC 25), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *mirror image*, *reverse gravity*, *unholy blight* (DC 25), *veil* (self only; DC 27)

1/day—*power word stun,* summon (level 6, 1d3 glabrezu vassals 20%, 1d4+1 vrock vassals 50%)

1/month—*wish* (already used)

TACTICS

Use the tactics from Subtier 12–13.

STATISTICS

Str 38, **Dex** 15, **Con** 33, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 32

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +31; **CMD** 43

Feats Extra Mythic Power[MA], Improved Critical (pincer), Improved Initiative[M], Improved Natural Attack (pincer), Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack[M], Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+21 when jumping), Bluff +37, Diplomacy +33, Fly +13, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (local) +23, Perception +29, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Gnome; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ mirror dodge

Gear *belt of physical might +4* (Strength and Dexterity)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deskari's Wing (Su) Koth'Vaul has grafted one of Deskari's wings to his back. This grants him a +5 resistance bonus on all saving throws. Additionally, whenever a creature damages Koth'Vaul with an attack that deals bludgeoning, force, piercing, or slashing damage, the wing releases a discordant scraping and rasping sound. All non-demon creatures within 10 feet of Koth'Vaul must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic effect, and the save DC is Constitution-based.

Mirror Dodge (Su) When hit by a melee or ranged attack, Koth'Vaul can expend one use of mythic power as an immediate action to replace himself with an illusory duplicate and teleport to any open square within 30 feet of his current position. He takes no damage from this attack, which instead destroys his illusory duplicate (similar to *mirror image*). Using this ability requires line of effect to the square he teleports into.

Unhindered (Sp) Using dark magic, Koth'Vaul has "stored" a handful of *wish* spells over the years, which can be triggered by his marked mortal servants. Each time Koth'Vaul fails a saving throw against or is otherwise affected by an effect that would hinder his ability to act freely, one of his marked followers can call out as a free action, "Koth'Vaul! I wish to free you as promised long ago!" This removes the effect automatically. Each of Koth'Vaul's five mortal servants had a contingent *wish* spell in place, but Koth'Vaul used two of them in previous combats, meaning only three contingent spells remain. If a marked mortal follower is slain or incapacitated before his or her *wish* is used, the spell is wasted. This cannot protect Koth'Vaul from falling unconscious from hit point damage.

Treasure: If the PCs defeat Koth'Vaul, they can remove the wing from his back. It retains some of its properties, becoming the magic cloak *Deskari's wing.*

Development: Even after Koth'Vaul's death, the Abyss in this region is still in flux. With an hour's work, the PCs can eventually bend the Abyss to their will and create a brief portal back to Golarion. Alternatively, they can simply return to Golarion through the tear into the Worldwound, as long as they have not already sealed the rift (see below). If the PCs

did not kill all of the mortal followers of Koth'Vaul, they can convince the survivors to return to civilization with a successful DC 34 Diplomacy check (or DC 36 in Subtier 14–15).

Rewards: If the PCs do not defeat Koth'Vaul, reduce each PC's gold earned by the following amount.

Subtier 12–13: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 5,000 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 6,250 gp.

Subtier 14–15: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 7,500 gp.

SEALING THE WOUND

Whether the PCs travel to the Rasping Rifts through the portal in the Worldwound or use their own magic to reach Deskari's former realm, wise PCs are likely to recognize that an open rift to the Abyss represents an ongoing threat. The ritual to seal the rift is complex. It takes 60 minutes to perform, during which time the PCs must attempt one Knowledge (arcana) check, one Knowledge (geography) check, one Knowledge (religion) check, and three Knowledge (planes) checks. The DCs of these checks is 32 in Subtier 12–13, or 36 in Subtier 14–15. The designated primary caster for the ritual must attempt at least one of these checks, but he can delegate the rest of the checks to other PCs. These checks cannot benefit from aid another. If the PCs succeed at four or more of these checks, they successfully seal the rift. The primary caster is exhausted from the strain, but only a faint scar remains on the land. If the PCs fail three or more of these checks, they do not successfully seal the rift. Worse, their efforts backfire, and the rift tears open further. They can attempt to seal the rift again, but the DC of all skill checks increases by 5 for each failed ritual, and they must select a different primary caster each time.

CONCLUSION

After killing Koth'Vaul, the PCs are celebrated as heroes. An enormous statue is erected in their honor at the Starrise Spire. The PCs are each consulted during the statue's construction, allowing them to pick an appropriate pose or engraving to include on the monument. Over the next several years, hundreds of schemes created by Koth'Vaul come to light all across Golarion as cultists are rooted out and exposed. Though the process will be long, with Koth'Vaul dead, the world can finally be healed of his many evils. If the PCs defeated Koth'Vaul, they each earn the End of Lying Horns boon on their Chronicle sheets.

If the PCs spared any of Koth'Vaul's mortal followers and returned them to Golarion, these cultists are disoriented and confused without their leader. They are afraid of the PCs, and deep down they are perplexed that the PCs spared their lives. Their future lies in the hands of the PCs, whether that is turning them in to authorities to face justice or setting them on the first steps of a rather long road toward redemption.

A PC who accepted the heart of Deskari is trapped in the Rasping Rifts. On the way to becoming a demon lord in his own right, this PC may choose to embrace his new role and climb the hierarchy of the Abyss. Alternatively, the PC may reject this fate. Though that path forward is treacherous, in time the PC may be able separate a portion of the Rasping Rifts from the Abyss, creating a new demiplane that is better aligned with his own values and goals. Whatever happens, the fate of this PC is now well beyond the manipulations of mortals. Mark the PC who accepted the heart as dead. This PC earns the Master of the Rasping Rifts on his Chronicle sheet.

REPORTING CONDITIONS

If the PCs defeated Koth'Vaul, check box A. If they spared at least one of his human followers, check box B. If a PC accepted Deskari's heart, check box C.

PRIMARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs fulfill their primary objective if they kill Koth'Vaul. Doing so earns each PC 1 Prestige Point.

SECONDARY SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The PCs fulfill their secondary success condition if they manage to close the portal to the Rasping Rifts in the Worldwound or if they spare any of Koth'Vaul's mortal followers and convince them to return to Golarion to face justice or find redemption. Achieving either of these objectives earns each PC 1 additional Prestige Point.

Handout #1: Muhlia's Missive

Greetings,

I owe you a great debt for sparing my life in within the depths of Thurl's maze. After witnessing Thurl's depravity, I became convinced that the world must be rid of evils like him. To that end, since we parted I have spent time investigating the shadowy figure behind Thurl, the demon who used foul magic to return him to life. This demon was, of course, Koth'Vaul. Unfortunately, the demon covers his tracks well, and I could not find any weakness to exploit.

His vassals and servants, however, were not so well hidden. Four demonic vassals of great power serve him and, through occult investigations, I was able to learn fragments of each of their true names. While not enough to command the demons, these fragments still hold power. Scribe them onto your weapons and armor with holy water, and they will aid you in your battle against the fiends.

Handout #2: Eating Deskari's Heart

The rift around you fades away, its colors and sounds draining until you find yourself in total darkness and silence. Searing pain pierces your chest, and your heart beats wildly. The slimy, crunchy piece of demon flesh in your mouth writhes in time to the beating of your heart.

Sound returns, in the form of skittering, chattering, and buzzing sounds of swarms of insects. In an instant, they engulf you, crawling over every inch of your flesh, pressing into your nose and mouth and attempting to burrow beneath your skin. With a simple exertion of will, you repel them all. "Good," Deskari's buzzing voice echoes. "You are not too weak to survive this."

You are back in the Rasping Rifts, Deskari's former realm. Here, the Abyss itself reaches out toward you, speaking into your mind. "Someone must rise in his place." The demons in the distance stop their fighting, turning toward you. They are curious, and they are afraid. Deskari presses into your mind. He's trying to be subtle, but you can feel his movements. You can also feel his shock and rage as you prove less pliable than he expected.

One thing is for certain—if you finish eating Deskari's heart, you will become stronger than you ever imagined. But this strength will not come without great cost. You can stop now, or you can keep going. Tell your GM whether you decide to turn back now or to devour the rest of the heart.

Handout #3: A Taste of Deskari's Power

You have let Deskari's blood flow through your veins, or you have stolen power from his heart on your own terms. Whatever the case, you have avoided the dire consequences that could have come from allowing more of the demon lord's power to infuse you. You gain the following abilities for the duration of this adventure.

Abyssal Attunement: You no longer take penalties on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma-based skill checks based on the difference between the Abyss's alignment and your own. Additionally, you are particularly adept at manipulating the raw substance of the Abyss, an ability that will have mechanical benefits in your encounter with Koth'Vaul.

Initiative: You gain a +2 bonus on initiative checks.

Epic Strikes: Your attacks with natural and manufactured weapons bypass DR/epic.

Mythic Power: You gain two uses of mythic power per day. You can use this power in the following ways.

• *Surge:* After you fail any check that uses a d20 roll, as an immediate action you can expend one use of mythic power to roll 1d6 and retroactively add the result to the check.

• *Extra Action:* Up to once per round as a free action on your turn, you can expend one use of mythic power to take an additional standard action. This action cannot be used to cast a spell.

Handout #4: The Heart of Deskari

Deskari has granted you a significant portion of his remaining power. As his magic surged into you, you fought a titanic battle of wills, during which the demon lord attempted to turn you into his loyal pawn. You have emerged battered but with your sense of self intact. You are now bound to what was once his realm, the Rasping Rifts. He intended for you to rebuild the realm on his terms, carrying out his orders without question, but you are the one who will shape its future. Will you embrace the nature of your new power and rise as a new demon lord, or will you reject it, using your resolve to bring a new beginning to this corner of the Abyss? Regardless of your intentions, Koth'Vaul's plans are now a larger threat to you than ever. You can sense Deskari's other heart beating in his chest, and you know that until he lies dead at your feet, Koth'Vaul will stop at nothing to destroy you.

Demon: You are now a demon. Your creature type changes to outsider, with the chaotic, demon, and evil subtypes. This does not automatically adjust your alignment, though you can adjust your alignment any number of steps toward chaotic evil now if you choose. You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. You gain immunity to electricity and poison, and resistance 10 to acid, cold, and fire. You learn Abyssal if you did not already speak it and gain telepathy with a range of 100 feet.

Abyssal Attunement: You are native to the Abyss. Even if your alignment is not chaotic evil, you can treat your alignment as chaotic evil whenever it would be more beneficial to you. You are particularly adept at manipulating the raw substance of the Abyss, an ability that will have mechanical benefits in your encounter with Koth'Vaul.

Initiative: You gain a +4 bonus on initiative checks.

Mythic Power: You gain four uses of mythic power per day. You can use this power in the following ways.

• *Surge:* After you fail any check that uses a d20 roll, as an immediate action you can expend one use of mythic power to roll 1d6 and retroactively add the result to the check.

• *Extra Action:* Up to once per round as a free action on your turn, you can expend one use of mythic power to take an additional standard action. This action cannot be used to cast a spell.

Additionally, you can select one additional mythic power ability from the following list. Once you use one of these abilities, you must cross the others off this sheet.

• *Spell Surge:* As a swift action, you can expend one use of mythic power to cast any one arcane, divine, or psychic spell without expending a prepared spell or spell slot. If you prepare spells, this spell must be one you prepared today (even if you have already cast it); if you're a spontaneous caster, this spell must be one of your spells known. If the spell requires a saving throw, any non-mythic creatures affected by the spell roll twice and take the lower result. If you must attempt a caster level check for the spell to overcome a creature's spell resistance, you gain a +4 bonus on the check and can roll twice and take the higher result. You can't add a metamagic feat to a spell you cast using this ability.

• *Sudden Block:* As an immediate action, you can expend one use of mythic power to hinder a melee attack made against you or an adjacent ally. Add 4 to your AC or the ally's AC against this attack. The creature making the attack must make two attack rolls and take the lower result. Once the attack is resolved, you or your ally (your choice) can make one melee attack against the creature. The damage from this attack bypasses all damage reduction.

• *Surprise Strike:* As a swift action, you can expend one use of mythic power to make a melee attack or ranged attack against a target within 30 feet, in addition to any other attacks you make this round. When you make a surprise strike, the target is considered flat-footed regardless of any class features or abilities it might have, and you gain a +4 bonus on your attack roll. Damage from this attack bypasses damage reduction.

Granting Spells: You can grant spells of up to 4th level to those who worship Deskari, as well as those who worship you directly. The domains you grant your worshippers are Chaos and Evil.

APPENDIX: STAT BLOCKS

The following creatures from Pathfinder RPG books appear in this scenario.

DEMON, GLABREZU

Four arms grace the torso of this towering monstrosity. The monster's eyes shine with a mix of intelligence and cruelty.

GLABREZU **CR 13**

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 61

CE Huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (+20 natural, –2 size)

hp 186 (12d10+120)

Fort +18, **Ref** +4, **Will** +11

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 pincers +20 (2d8+10/19–20), 2 claws +20 (1d6+10), bite +20 (1d8+10)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 pincers, 2d8+15)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

Constant—*true seeing*

At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 19), *confusion* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *veil* (self only), *unholy blight*

1/day—*power word stun*, summon (level 4, 1 glabrezu 20% or 1d2 vrocks 50%)

1/month—*wish* (granted to a mortal humanoid only)

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 11, **Con** 31, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 34

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (pincer), Persuasive, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +28, Diplomacy +22, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Perception +26, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +7, Use Magic Device +17; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

DEMON, NALFESNEE (MYTHIC)

This porcine demon has huge tusks and tiny wings, and its furred flesh oozes with greasy black and purple energy.

MYTHIC NALFESHNEE **CR 17/MR 7**

Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures 183

CE Huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar, mythic)

Init +12[M]; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +32

Aura unholy aura (DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 13, flat-footed 35 (+4 deflection, +1 Dex, +23 natural, –2 size)

hp 287 (15d10+205); fast healing 5

Fort +22, **Ref** +10, **Will** +21

DR 10/epic and good; **Immune** fire, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +28 (3d8+15/18–20), 2 claws +28 (2d6+15/19–20 plus steal)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks demonic knowledge, mythic power (7/day, surge +1d10), touch of chaos, unholy nimbus

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

Constant—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *true seeing*, *unholy aura* (DC 25)

At will—*call lightning* (DC 20), *feeblemind* (DC 22), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *move earth*, *slow* (DC 20), *stone shape*, *stone tell*

3/day—*scrying*

1/day—*contact other plane*, summon (level 5, 1 nalfeshnee 20%, 1d4 hezrous 40%, or 1d4 vrocks 50%)

STATISTICS

Str 40, **Dex** 13, **Con** 29, **Int** 23, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +32 (+34 bull rush); **CMD** 47 (49 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite)[M], Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative[M], Iron Will[M], Power Attack[M]

Skills Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Fly +11, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +32, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Demonic Knowledge (Su) By expending one use of mythic power as a free action, the demon learns one weakness, vulnerability, or special defense of an opponent within reach.

Steal (Ex) A mythic nalfeshnee that hits with a claw attack can attempt to steal an object from its target with a combat maneuver check as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The foe receives a +5 bonus to his CMB if the object is fastened to their body (such as a cloak, sheathed weapon, or pouch). The nalfeshnee cannot steal objects that are closely worn (such as armor, backpacks, clothing, or rings) or held objects.

Touch of Chaos (Sp) This functions like the Chaos domain granted power, except the demon can expend one use of mythic power as a free action to use this ability when it hits with a natural attack.

Unholy Nimbus (Su) Three times per day as a free action, the

demon can create writhing colored lights on its body. One round later, the light bursts in a 60-foot radius. Any non-demon caught within this area must succeed at a DC 24 Will save or be dazed for 1d10 rounds as visions of madness hound it. The save DC is Charisma-based.

RETRIEVER

A spider the size of a bull elephant rears up on its back four legs in a violent challenge, eyes shimmering with magical energy.

RETRIEVER **CR 11**

Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 234

CE Huge construct (extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+3 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

hp 137 (15d10+55); fast healing 5

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +19 (1d8+6 plus grab), 4 claws +19 (2d6+6/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks eye rays (+16 ranged touch)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +15)

At will—*discern location*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 3, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23 (+25 bull rush, +27 grapple); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. bull rush, 40 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +3 (+11 to jump), Perception +15

Languages Abyssal (can't speak)

SQ relentless

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Eye Rays (Su) A retriever's eyes can produce four different magical rays, each with a range of 100 feet. Each round, it can fire one ray as a free action. A particular ray is usable only once every 4 rounds. A retriever can fire an eye ray in the same round that it makes physical attacks-firing an eye ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The save DC for eye rays is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. The eye ray effects are the following.

Fire: Deals 12d6 fire damage (DC 19 Reflex half).

Cold: Deals 12d6 cold damage (DC 19 Reflex half).

Electricity: Deals 12d6 electricity damage (DC 19 Reflex half).

Petrification: Target must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or turn to stone permanently.

Relentless (Su) A retriever is constantly under the effects of *spider climb* and *water walk*; these abilities cannot be dispelled.

WORM THAT WALKS

Although this robed wizard stands and moves like a man, his body is a writhing mass of squirming, slippery worms.

WORM THAT WALKS **CR 14**

Male human worm that walks conjurer 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 286)

NE Medium vermin (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight)

hp 113 (13d6+65); fast healing 14

Fort +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities worm that walks traits; **DR** 15/—; **Immune** critical hits, disease, flanking, paralysis, poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +10 (1d4–1 plus grab)

Special Attacks discorporate, grab (Large), squirming embrace, tenacious

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +18)

At will—dimensional steps (390 feet/day)

8/day—acid dart (1d6+6 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +18)

7th—*plane shift* (DC 22), *project image* (DC 22)

6th—*acid fog*, *disintegrate* (DC 21), *summon monster VI*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 20), *dismissal* (DC 20), *shadow evocation* (DC 20), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *teleport*

4th—*black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 19), *summon monster IV*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *protection from energy*, *slow* (DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 18), *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *summon swarm*

1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *feather fall*, *grease*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *reduce person* (DC 16), *shield*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Opposition Schools Evocation, Necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 20, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 26

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Diehard[B], Dodge, Improved Initiative, Light Armor Proficiency, Scribe Scroll, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Craft (alchemy) +21, Fly +20, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception +22, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal
SQ arcane bond (staff of charming), summoner's charm (6 rounds)
Combat Gear *staff of charming*; **Other Gear** *+4 leather armor*, *cloak of resistance +4*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Discorporate (Su) A worm that walks can collapse into a shapeless swarm of worms as a free action. All held, worn, and carried items fall and its Strength score drops to 1. The worm that walks functions as a true swarm while discorporated, with a reach of 0 feet (its space remains unchanged). While discorporated, the worm that walks loses all of its defensive abilities and gains all of the standard swarm traits. It loses its slam attacks and all special abilities and special attacks, but can make a swarm attack that deals damage equal to its engulf attack. A worm that walks can reform into its true form (including equipping all gear in reach) as a full-round action as long as it has at least 1 hit point.

Squirming Embrace (Ex) If a worm that walks grapples a foe, as a swift action, it can cause a swarm of worms to squirm over the grappled creature. These worms deal 3d6 points of automatic swarm damage with no attack roll needed. If a creature takes damage from the swarm, it is also subject to the swarm's distraction ability, and must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based. A worm that walks can only have one embraced target at a time, but it does not have to continue grappling in order to maintain the embrace. If the worm that walks moves more than 5 feet from the swarm or dismisses the swarm (a free action), the swarm dies. Any area attack that damages the swarm or any severe or stronger wind effect that affects the swarm's target kills it.

Tenacious (Ex) A worm that walks gains a +4 racial bonus on CMB checks made to grapple and a +4 racial bonus to its CMD.

Worm that Walks Traits A worm that walks has no discernible anatomy, and is not subject to critical hits or flanking. Reducing a worm that walks to 0 hit points causes it to discorporate (see below)—a worm that walks at 0 hit points is staggered, and one at negative hit points is dying. Worms that walk are immune to any physical spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of such spells and effects generated by the worm that walks itself, which treat the worm that walks as one single creature if it so chooses. Mind-affecting effects that target single creatures function normally against a worm that walks, since the creature's individual components share a hive mind. A worm that walks takes half again as much damage (+50%) from damaging area effects, such as *fireball* and splash weapons. Worms that walk are susceptible to high winds—treat a worm that walks as a Fine creature for the purposes of determining wind effects.

Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-09: The Rasping Rebirth

Event _____ **Date** _____

GM # _____ **GM Character #** _____

GM Name _____ **GM Prestige Earned** _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Concordance
☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Character # _____ **Prestige Points** ☐

Character Name _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court ☐ Concordance

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Character # _____ **Prestige Points** ☐

Character Name _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
☐ Scarab Sages ☐ Silver Crusade ☐ Sovereign Court ☐ Concordance

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Character # _____ **Prestige Points** ☐

Character Name _____

☐ Dark Archive ☐ The Exchange ☐ Grand Lodge ☐ Liberty's Edge
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Character # _____ **Prestige Points** ☐

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Character Name _____

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #10-09: The Rasping Rebirth

Character Chronicle #

☐ Core Campaign

Player Name	A.K.A. Character Name	Organized Play #	Character #	Faction
			-	

This Chronicle sheet grants access to the following:

End of Lying Horns (Legacy): Thanks to your heroic efforts, Koth'Vaul did not become a new demon lord, and the Pathfinder Society no longer has to fear the wrath and guile of this formidable adversary. Among his many plans, Koth'Vaul had begun planting tieflings in the Society that he planned to subtly transform into his own agents. Write an organized play number and First Edition Pathfinder Society character number at the end of this boon. That character gains the following benefit. Include a copy of this Chronicle sheet with that character's records, crossing off all other rewards on the copied sheet.

Abyssal Heritage: You can play a tiefling character (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide* 268, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 264), beginning at level 1 as normal. Other than access to this additional race, all character creation rules are the same as those outlined in the *Pathfinder Society Roleplaying Guild Guide*. This Chronicle sheet must be the first Chronicle sheet for the given character, and you must bring a copy of one of the rulebooks listed above to all sessions in which this character appears as if access to this race selection were granted by the Additional Resources list.

Character Number: _____-_____

Master of the Rasping Rifts: You devoured Deskari's heart, becoming the new immortal master of the Abyssal realm known as the Rasping Rifts. Deskari expected you to serve him as his loyal steward, but he is not strong enough to command you from his grave. You will be unable to leave the Rasping Rifts for several centuries, but the direction the realm takes is now in your hands. This PC is permanently retired from play. However, he becomes a legal deity for your future Pathfinder Society characters. Include a copy of this Chronicle sheet with the records of any PC who worships this PC. You grant access to the same domains and favored weapon as Deskari.

Corona Blade (**aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 10th; **Price** 50,355 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.): This weapon was once a *sun blade*, but the Abyss has slowly altered its abilities. It has the properties of *a sun blade*, with the following changes. It deals additional damage to creatures with a strong or overwhelming aura of law (see *detect law*) instead of to Negative Energy plane creatures or undead creatures. Additionally, instead of the sunlight power, it allows its wielder to create an unholy nimbus of light as a standard action in a 30-foot radius burst, dazing all non-demon creatures other than its wielder for 1d4 rounds (Will DC 20 negates) and suppressing the weapon's additional enhancement bonus against evil creatures for 1 minute.

Deskari's Wing (**aura** moderate abjuration and evocation; **CL** 10th; **Discounted Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.): This cloak is made from one of the wings of the demon lord Deskari. It functions as a *cloak of resistance +3*, but the resistance bonus it grants increases by 1 against acid, cold and fire attacks, and by 2 against charm, compulsion, death, electricity, and poison effects. Additionally, once per day when the wearer takes damage from an attack that deals bludgeoning, force, piercing, or slashing damage, the wearer can spend an immediate action to cause the wing to release a discordant rasping sound. All non-demon creatures within 10 feet must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic effect. *Deskari's wing* can be upgraded, improving its baseline resistance bonus (+3 to +4 for 10,000 gp, +4 to +5 for 15,000 gp).

Staff of Locusts (**aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 9th; **Discounted Price** 25,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.): This *+1 quarterstaff* is made of the compacted husks of locusts. While holding the staff, the wielder gains DR 5/— against the attacks of swarms. Melee attacks with the staff deal double damage to all swarms, even those that would normally be immune to weapon damage. In addition, any time the wielder casts a spell or uses an ability that summons a swarm, he can spend 1 charge from the staff as a swift action to add 1d6 to the swarm's damage and increase the save DCs to resist its effects by 2. The staff allows the use of *summon swarm* (1 charge) and *insect plague* (3 charges).

Subtier 12-13

belt of physical might +2 (10,000 gp; Strength and Constitution)
cloak of resistance +4 (16,000 gp)
corona blade (50,335 gp)
Deskari's wing (discounted price 20,000 gp or more, see above)
staff of locusts (discounted price 25,000 gp)

Subtier 14-15

belt of physical might +4 (40,000 gp; Strength and Constitution)
cloak of resistance +4 (16,000 gp)
corona blade (50,335 gp)
Deskari's wing (discounted price 20,000 gp or more, see above)
headband of vast intelligence +6 (36,000 gp; Diplomacy, Knowledge [religion], Survival)
pearl of power (4th level; 16,000 gp)
staff of locusts (discounted price 25,000 gp)

MAX GOLD

SUBTIER	☐ Slow	☐ Normal
12–13	6,639	13,277
Out of Subtier	8,681	17,361
14–15	10,722	21,444
—	—	—

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP

GM's Initials

XP Gained (GM ONLY)

Final XP Total

FAME

Initial Prestige | Initial Fame

GM's Initials

Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)

Prestige Spent

Current Prestige | Final Fame

GOLD

Starting GP

GM's Initials

GP Gained (GM ONLY)

GM's Initials

Day Job (GM ONLY)

Gold Spent

Total

For GM Only

EVENT	EVENT CODE	DATE	Game Master's Signature	GM Pathfinder Society #